

THE

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THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

As I write these lines, another year is hastening to its close. It is a period which naturally leads me to converse with the past. I cast my eye back not only on the year which is soon to leave me, never to return, but on those which preceded it. As I take this review, I am struck and affected by the vicissitudes of human affairs, which my own recollection, and which history suggest. I seem to look on an ocean, ever restless, and strowed with a thousand ruins. My mind is filled with solemnity, but not with sadness, for I see and adore in the changes of human things, the hand of an all wise and merciful Disposer. I encourage this train of reflection, for it serves to give sobriety to my views of life, and earnestness to my desires of that "inheritance which fadeth not away."

As I look back, I recollect friends and acquaintances, who were distinguished by health and activity. They seemed to defy the elements, and almost imagined themselves privileged against disease; and I have seen these arrested by sudden and mortal

sickness, their cheeks withered, their muscular frames reduced to a shadow, their elastick limbs stiffened and motionless as the clod of the valley; whilst others, who tottered with infirmity, who were shaken with every blast, whose laborious respiration seemed the knell of dissolution, have risen almost from the grave to take the places of the strong, perhaps to reap the fruits of their exertions.

As I look back, I recollect those who were nursed in the lap of affluence and ease, whose early wants were anticipated by parental fondness, who were decked with ornaments, before they had knowledge enough to be vain, whose hands no toil ever hardened, and whose minds not an anxious thought for subsistence ever disturbed; and I have seen these cast down by their own improvidence or by the hand of God from their giddy elevation, reduced to a scanty table and to mean attire, left to depend on those whom once they overlooked, forced to engage in occupations, which once they scorned; whilst others,

who were born under a lowly roof, and who inherited nothing but habits of toil and industry which necessity imposed, have been borne on a prosperous tide to unexpected wealth, and have awakened admiration and envy by their luxury and magnificence.

When these recollections fill my mind, I sometimes ask myself, what changes I should witness, should I be permitted to revisit this metropolis at the distance of seventy or a hundred years from the present moment. I represent myself inquiring, at that remote period, after families which are now distinguished. I hear of one, that every descendant is dead, and the very name extinguished. I am pointed to some poor labourer in the streets, and am told that he is the only representative of another. I hear of another, that its surviving members, wasted by extravagance and vice, occupy the lowest place in society. I visit the abodes of my friends, and I meet new countenances, I hear new names, I see not a relic which recalls those whom I love.

But the changes in human affairs, which my own experience suggests, though solemn and affecting, are still slight, when compared with those which history unfolds to me. As I traverse past ages, what astonishing reverses crowd on my mind. I see falling thrones; I see humbled, deserted, and murdered princes, and sometimes the crown plucked from its hereditary possessor, to adorn a brow

which once, perhaps, was covered with the sweat of humble industry. I see vast empires which were reared by the toils of ages, now sinking under their unwieldy weight, now overwhelmed by conquest, now desolated by barbarous invaders whom they had long despised. When I repair, in thought, to the eastern world, the earliest seat of arts, refinement, and learning, I am every where called to ponder and mourn over the ruins of ancient greatness. The hissing snake admonishes me to view at a distance the fallen towers of Babylon; and I labour in vain, to search out the spot on which Nineveh reared her walls and palaces.

At these recollections, my heart sometimes sinks within me. But I look above and around me. I see the sun shining on me with as bright and cheering beams as he shed on men of former ages. I see the fields arrayed in verdure, as fresh and fair as saluted the eyes of departed generations. I see, that whilst the labours of men have crumbled to dust, the works of God survive. In the constancy of nature, I learn the unchangeable majesty, glory, and benevolence of its author. I learn, that amidst the prostrated thrones of mortals, one throne is eternal; that, amidst the defeated schemes of man, the counsels of God stand for ever. Instructed by Jesus Christ, I look forward to the great result of these solemn vicissitudes of human affairs, and I rejoice in the persua-

sion, that all are tending to the display of the perfections of God, to the triumphs of truth and virtue, and to the glory and felicity of creation. I feel, that the spirit within me, which retraces the past, and lives by hope in futurity, is an imperishable principle, that it is destined to survive the

changes of material systems, and that if purified by the vicissitudes of this transitory life, it will shine as the sun, with perpetual splendour, in the kingdom of my Father.—In this hope, shall I not be tranquil amidst the fluctuations of society and the convulsions of nature.

POPULAR REASONS FOR STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES.

IN no respect is the difference of present manners more to be lamented than in the diminished attention which is given to the Scriptures of divine truth. Once they were esteemed a part of the indispensable furniture of every family. The child was taught to spell out their contents, while the old delighted to pore over the sacred pages, till their subjects were as familiar to the understanding and as prompt to the memory as the volume itself was common to the sight and ready to the hand. Use, instead of diminishing, confirmed that reverence for the book of God, which was generated almost in the cradle and grew up in the school; so that instances were frequent of men, who knew much of their bible, but who knew little besides.

With many the case is now reversed. Every thing is eagerly read but that volume which would teach us to read without danger of corruption and without waste of application. The number of those who profess to read has, of late years, surprisingly in-

creased; but in this increase of readers, are there not many who look into books only to diversify the forms of idle amusement; who read not to profit, but to play; not to learn more rapidly, but to trifle more seriously? For this neglect it is more easy to account than to apologize; for it is not difficult to perceive that the prodigious multiplication of books in this superficial age, of books adapted to every possible variety of capacity and taste, and easily accessible to every rank of society, has either jostled the Bible from its place, or buried it from notice; so that those who formerly read it because it was the only volume they possessed, might be surprised to find, if they were now alive, with how many it is the only volume which is not thought worth possessing.

The Bible, it is true, is not a book which is to be made popular by our commendations; still it may be useful to remind the busy, that they would not waste their time, the elegant that they would not hurt their taste, the gay that they would not spoil

their temper, and the philosophick that they would not dishonour their superiour sagacity, by reading and even remembering the writings of revelation. We shall, therefore, attempt to show, that this book has claims upon your attention which no other book presents.

In the first place, it professes to contain several revelations from God to man, made at different times, and accommodated to the successive capacities and wants of mankind. It records actions which no unaided human power could perform, and discloses truths which no human understanding alone is able to discover. These are lofty pretensions, sufficient, we should imagine, to awaken the curiosity of the most sluggish mind; and, if they carry no absurdity upon the face of them, worthy of being diligently examined. Other books, it is true, make similar pretences, and we rejoice in the opportunity of comparison. Go read, if you can, a chapter in the Koran, or amuse yourself with the heathen mythologies; and then take your Bible from the shelf, and though you may lay it by with incredulity or shut it up with disappointment, you will find no absurdities to laugh at, no extravagances to excuse, no enthusiasm to transport, and no artifices to entrap your judgment.

2. Besides the miraculous facts and supernatural truths which it contains, this book professes to teach a kind of practical wisdom, which was never before attained in the moral instructions of phi-

losophers. It treats of the most interesting subjects in the world, the actual condition, the moral duties, and the future destination of man. Here you find them discussed, not with the doubts, the speculations, and anxieties with which the ancients were accustomed to reason on the subject, but in the unhesitating and unretracting language of men who are confident of the supernatural communications they had received. They uniformly talk to you in the lofty address of teachers who know that they are speaking to immortal spirits. If any man wishes or suspects that he may survive the dissolution of the body, and live again in some other state of existence, he must be either stupid or perverse, if he does not eagerly explore what the Scriptures contain on this subject.

3. But even if this book did not record the revelations of God's will; if it told us nothing of our origin, our duty, or our destination; if it did not address itself either to our hopes or our fears, and were nothing more, indeed, than a mere human composition; still it is worthy of being attended to as containing the oldest and the most authentick documents of primitive history which are now extant. The book of Genesis professes to relate the origin of the human race, their dispersions, their settlements, and their augmentation. The narration extends back to a period which no records, even of the oldest nations, remain to illustrate; and, when it joins the

tenour of profane history, it is confirmed by the current traditions of many nations, and is uncontradicted by the authentick memorials of any. We refer now principally to the historical portions of the Old Testament; and here we venture to assert, that the celebrated nations of Greece and Rome do not present so interesting a picture to the philosophical historian as the little people of the Jews. The former followed the usual laws of national progress and decline. During their national existence, they exhibited those various political convulsions which we are taught, by the experience of ages, to expect in civil constitutions, as naturally as in the human frame to look for the diseases of childhood or the infirmities of age. From small beginnings they grew into importance, flourished in temporary grandeur, sunk in gradual corruption, dwindled or were overwhelmed by foreign invasion; so that the once mighty names of Greek or Roman are now heard only in the polished periods of the historian; and the descendants of those who bore them are mingled and lost in the barbarous multitude, who now trample with impunity on classick ground. With the Jews all is different. They are delivered, in a miraculous manner, from a land where they had been long enslaved. Without provisions and without clothes, they march through a trackless wilderness under the conduct of leaders apparently timorous, unenter-

prising, and unpractised in the art of war. At length they settle in Palestine, a country surrounded with barbarous enemies, and remarkable (if we may credit the reports of modern travellers) for the sterility of its soil, though, compared with the wilderness of Sinai, it appeared to flow with milk and honey. Here they live under a government of which no man was the head; a government where all the laws, the ceremonies, and even the established customs were professedly derived from the immediate instruction of heaven. Whatever the philosopher may think of their story, it contains acknowledged facts which are not to be paralleled in the usual experience of mankind. Here is a nation, who worship but one God, while the rest of the world are, without exception, polytheistick and idolatrous. Here is a nation peaceably governed by a meek man who had no force at his disposal, who but proposes his laws and they are received, who writes down his sanctions and they are executed. He ordains a regulation unexampled in the history of nations, that every seventh year should be a year of rest, when the voice of labour should be silent, and the weapons of war should be hung up in peace. The ordinance is observed; but in the sabbatical year, no famine oppresses, and no invaders molest them. They are warned that if they relapse into idolatry, they shall be carried captive into a distant land.

They transgress, and are carried away to Babylon. By the favour of their prince they are permitted to return. Their idolatrous propensities are for ever extinguished, and since their restoration they have been even obstinate in the worship of Jehovah alone, and continue to make the unity of God the primary article of their faith. It is now eighteen centuries since their polity was destroyed, and notwithstanding their utter dispersion over the habitable globe, the name of Jews is not yet merged in the inhabitants of Christendom. They still retain their nationality and their religious distinctions, and continue, to the present hour, the most peculiar people on the face of the earth. In what way will you account for the extraordinary history and fortunes of this nation; a history confirmed by numerous collateral testimonies of Heathen authors, and a condition which is the subject of individual observation, so easily, as by admitting the truth of the miraculous events and supernatural interpositions recorded in the sacred books of Jews and Christians? To a philosopher, such an anomalous example in the history of states must be interesting in the extreme; and if the record were found in any other book than the Bible, it would be cherished, even by a skeptical antiquary, as an invaluable fragment of ancient history.

4. This book is worthy of your perusal because it contains some

of the earliest specimens of written composition, and some of the loftiest conceptions of human genius. Long before men were taught by rules to write, before there were any models to imitate or to avoid, or any criticks to censure or to praise, David, that sweet bard of Israel, swept the solemn strings of the celestial lyre, Solomon dictated his aphorisms of ethical wisdom, and Isaiah, rapt into future times, poured fourth his denunciations and predictions. The oriental style is confessedly hyperbolic; and all other remains of eastern poetry are hung round with tasteless decorations; but the poetical portions of the Hebrew scriptures are conceived in a strain of sublime simplicity, which has extorted the commendation of criticks, and mocked the imitation of posterity.

5. The Scriptures are recommended to the attention of the curious by this single circumstance, that no books now extant have been preserved with such astonishing scrupulosity. The Jews entrusted their law to a set of men who numbered every letter in the volume, to whom every jot and tittle was familiar as the letters of the alphabet to us. It is also well known to the learned, that even in those remains of classical authors which have been most carefully transmitted, there are more acknowledged mutilations, more irreparable corruptions, and more essential variations of copies, than can be found

within an equal compass in any book of the Old or New Testament.

6. The last consideration which we shall offer to encourage you to pay especial attention to this book is this ; it is more frequently quoted and referred to, and its subjects and sentiments are interwoven with a greater variety of other reading, than any other work published in any age or country. The knowledge of the Bible is necessary to the understanding of a great part of the literature of Christendom. It is not a book peculiar to a single profession in society. It contains no technical terms, no uncommon phraseology, to make it

unintelligible to the mass of readers. It is profitable for doctrine, for instruction, and for edification in righteousness. We are not extravagant in asserting, that if this book could once be lost, the literary, moral, and religious character of society, would be totally reversed. And of what other book in the world can it be said that the condition of mankind would be in any perceptible degree affected by its loss ? — Let not then, this book of the law depart out of your mouth ; but meditate therein day and night ; for concerning his testimonies we have known, of old, that God hath founded them forever. B.

CALL TO SELF-EXAMINATION.

For the Christian Disciple.

HAVING been a subscriber for the Christian Disciple, from its commencement, I have been pleased to notice, that one of its professed objects, is to “support the genuine principles of the Christian religion, and to diffuse its spirit among mankind.” The following remarks are offered for insertion, with a sincere view of promoting these desirable objects, by one who, sensible of his own deficiencies, wishes to unite in the examination he recommends to others.

A BEREAN.

This has been called the age of benevolence, and compared

with preceding ages, is perhaps justly so denominated. Innumerable societies have been instituted for ameliorating the miseries of mankind, and for improving their moral condition. Societies for extending to the offspring of the indigent, the benefits of education ; for sending Missionaries among the heathen ; for disseminating the scriptures in every clime ; and, lastly, for promoting, on earth, peace and good will among men.

That in this wide spread shew of benevolence, a real heartfelt sense of duty, founded on religious considerations has had its share, I feel no disposition to

deny. But, in an age when benevolence has become fashionable; when the appearance of it, advances our reputation among men; when the names of benefactors and contributors to works of charity, are regularly announced to the publick, through the medium of the press, and their characters held up to the admiration of an applauding world; a fear has arisen, that *some*, perhaps not a *few*, may, without very narrowly scrutinizing their own motives, rest satisfied with the aid which they conceive they are thus lending to the cause of religion, and with the character for benevolence thus easily acquired, without becoming clothed with that humility, which is one of the chief ornaments of the Christian profession, or striving after that holiness of life, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Far be it from me to discourage the efforts of real Christian benevolence, or to throw a damp over any well-meant efforts, to ameliorate the condition of mankind. But I wish to call the attention of those, who are uniting their aid in the promotion of these objects, to an examination of their own situation, as individual members of the Christian family. An examination of this kind, I have no doubt, would convince such as are not already sensible of it, that he who will be the disciple of Christ, must now, as formerly, deny himself, take up his daily cross, and follow him. That it is the contrite

heart; the heart that is humbled before God, and renovated by the influence of his spirit, that is alone, well pleasing in his sight. That it is not our own righteousness, established in our own way, but our submission "to the righteousness of God," that will be of any avail with Him who seeth in secret. We shall find these truths inscribed on the volume of Sacred Writ, and if we attentively listen to the voice of the inward monitor, I have no doubt, we shall find a corresponding testimony to their truth, within our own breasts. We shall find that every action, however specious in its appearance, or however estimated by the world, that is performed to obtain the applause of men, or to quiet our own consciences, independent of our submission to the cross of Christ, will not have its reward from heaven.

And I am far from believing, that such an examination as is here recommended, though it might abase ourselves in our own opinion, would have a tendency to lessen our love for mankind. In none, is this love more ardent, if indeed it can truly be said elsewhere to exist, than in the real Christian, united with, and founded upon, the love of God. But it will, in this union, be directed, not to those objects which are most popular, (merely because they are so,) but to those objects, to which the spirit of truth shall point our way; and, perhaps, not unfrequently in a way, wherein we shall find it our duty to act upon the spirit of

the scripture injunction, not to let "the left hand know what the right hand doeth," in our alms deeds.

When we reflect that it is righteousness alone, that truly exalteth a nation, and that the aggregate virtue or righteousness of a nation rests on no other basis, than the virtue of the individuals who compose it, the importance of individual piety becomes greatly enhanced in our view; and I have sometimes thought, when reflecting on the silent, but widely extended influence of ex-

ample, that he who, in all his intercourse with society, manifests that he is acting under the guidance of Christian principle, does more to promote the cause of truth and righteousness, though wealth be denied him, than he could possibly do under other circumstances, though possessed of the greatest abundance. But when to this primary qualification for usefulness, ample pecuniary means are added, how beautiful the union; how widely extended indeed, the influence of example.



PROGRESS OF TRUTH.

Mr. Editor,

It is very delightful to the true believer, to observe the diffusion of just views of Christianity among the different denominations which bear the name of Christ. It is the opinion of many judicious observers of the times, that a real and most important improvement is taking place in the conceptions which are formed of the nature and spirit of our religion. A remarkable example of this is furnished by a passage in a work on "Sacramental communion," lately published by the Rev. Dr. John M. Mason, of New-York; a gentleman who holds perhaps the first place among those who choose to distinguish themselves in our country by the name of "orthodox." The passage deserves a conspicuous place in a work like yours,

which is consecrated to the sublime and Christian purpose of spreading peace on earth, and good will among men. The passage is as follows:—

"*Let brotherly love continue*; was an injunction among the last which proceeded from the sanctified lips of Paul, the apostle, the aged, the Martyr. And for the best of reasons. It is a lesson, the most likely to be forgotten, and the most important to be remembered, of all the practical lessons which have been given to the children of men. The most likely to be forgotten, because every form and particle of their depravity has an interest in counteracting it—the most important to be remembered, because it is the principal proof of their reconciliation and com-

manion with God, and the main spring of their happiness both in this life, and that which is to come. Hatred, and her whole brood of envyings, strifes, clamours, jealousies, discords, are from Hell—the undisputed progeny of Satan. Charity, with her gentleness, kindness, long-suffering, mercies, meekness, and the whole train of personal loveliness and social graces, are from above; the fair and guileless offspring of the 'Father of lights.' The *very end* of the Redeemer's mission, the ULTIMATE OBJECT of his doctrines, his precepts, his example, his tears, his sacrifice, was to overthrow the reign of malice, and to rear upon its ruins the EMPIRE OF LOVE." Amen. Amen.

Such views of Christianity shed on it an infinite lustre. Let such views be diffused, and the hope of many Christians, that the millennial ages have commenced, will cease to be visionary. Let such views be diffused, and the wounds of the lacerated, bleeding and divided church of Jesus will be healed. Let such views prevail, and persecution and war, will be hurled from their long-usurped seats of power in the church and in the world, and the throne will be given to Charity, the spirit of heaven, the spirit of Jesus, the brightest perfection of God, the first and fairest of Christian virtues, the grace which above all others, assimilates and binds the soul to its Creator and Redeemer.

"THE TRIANGLE—THE SECOND SERIES OF NUMBERS."

THIS pamphlet was received after the article on the first series was sent to the press for December. The second series of numbers contains several interesting articles, but No. VI. demands all the room which can now be spared in the Christian Disciple. The greater part of the number will be given, and but few remarks will be made.

No. VI.

I HAVE before me the Pastoral Letter of the Synod of Philadelphia, dated Lancaster, September 20th, 1816, of which I give the first paragraph.

"Christian Brethren,

"The Synod assembled in Lancaster, at the present time, consists of a greater number of members than have been convened at any meeting for many years; and from their free conversation on the state of religion, it appears, that all the Presbyteries are more than commonly alive to the importance of contending earnestly for the faith, once delivered to the saints, and of resisting the introduction of Arian, Socinian, Arminian, and Hopkinsian heresies; which are some of the means, by which the enemy of souls would if possible, deceive the very elect."

The third paragraph runs thus :
 “ May the time never come in which our ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS shall determine that Hopkinsianism and the doctrines of our confession of faith are the same thing ; or that men are less exposed now, than in the days of the apostles, to the danger of perverting the right ways of the Lord.”

People of the union, hear this, and feel what gratitude you owe to a good Providence, which shields your religious rights from the persecuting fury of bigotry and intolerance.

The reader will now perceive the justice of the remarks made in the former series concerning the opposition made to the strain of doctrine called Hopkinsian. In this number I shall call his attention to a few remarks on this Pastoral Letter of the Synod of Philadelphia.

1. It is impossible not to perceive that Hopkinsianism is the grand error aimed at in that letter. They declare in the same letter, that there never was but one Socinian society within the bounds of the Synod.—An act so official and formal for a single congregation, and that perhaps a very small one, would scarcely appear decorous. As to Arianism, it is doubtful whether they have an individual of that heresy in all their bounds.

Nor did I ever know till now, nor was there ever a solitary instance, as I have heard, of any publick body in the United States, publishing a formal de-

nunciation of Arminianism, as heresy. Few if any of the Protestant churches have chosen to censure Arminianism as a damnable heresy : and it has never been done before the present instance in this country.

The Philadelphia Synod seem to have forgotten, that very large and respectable bodies of Christians in our own country, such as the Episcopalians, Methodists, and several others, are usually denominated Arminians. All these they have condemned in the severest and strongest terms, as hereticks ; have held them up to publick odium and abhorrence. Whatever that Synod may think, I cannot but esteem them as Christian churches, comprising many members of great piety, and having many divines of distinguished eminence.

[The second remark will be omitted.]

3. It condemns at one stroke an immense body of Christians in New-England, where it is well known, this strain of sentiment prevails almost universally ; and that whole body, in its various sections, are amicably represented in the General Assembly ; and their representatives, from year to year, sit on the same seats by the side of members of the Synod. Moreover, the Assembly is also represented in various conventions or associations of the New-England churches, wherever they assemble. But this would be a small consideration in comparison with another : Many ministers and churches

who actually belong to the General Assembly, perhaps one third, *perhaps one half*, are full in this strain of doctrine, and are condemned as hereticks by this Pastoral Letter.

4. The sentiments usually denominated Hopkinsian, were never considered as heresy by the founders of the Presbyterian church in America, nor by the wisest and ablest divines, who differed with them in any subsequent period, in Europe or America.

5. The measures taken by the Synod of Philadelphia, are pregnant with mischief, misery, and ruin; and all circumstances considered, I question whether the annals of the Christian church afford a greater instance of rashness, imprudence, impolicy, or injustice. Do they indeed imagine that this watchword will be taken from them, and that all the Synods in this connexion will ring with the dreadful denunciation, "*HERESY, and the means by which, if it were possible, the enemy of souls would deceive the very elect.*" What are we to expect next, provided this Synod act in character with their sentence and injunction? What is the rule of the everlasting gospel? "A heretick after the first and second admonition reject." What is to be the regular operation of this business, provided all who differ from Hopkinsianism shall condemn it as heresy? Individual members are to be hurled out of churches; churches are to be rent

with disputes and divisions, and some of them severed from Presbyteries: Presbyteries are to be turned out of Synods, and Synods divided; and by this time, what becomes of the Assembly itself? Its full orb will wane, and present a fading and sickly crescent; will become a proverb and by-word, a reproach and astonishment to all mankind.

And what impression will this measure make on the publick mind? How will it appear to this young and rising nation, whose struggles for her own independence and freedom are not yet forgotten? How will it strike at the feelings of the great and highly respectable fraternity of the Episcopal institution, who are carelessly anathematized as hereticks, merely for a handsome pretext to lengthen out the rod over their shoulders to reach others! For it is not to be doubted that that form of speech, "Arians, Socinians, Arminians, &c. was resorted to, merely to make the bundle of hereticks as huge as possible, that, by a kind of indiscrimination, the censure, the single censure on the heads of Hopkinsians, might not seem solitary and partial; in short, that it might appear one sweeping stroke at all heresy.

But I asked in a former paragraph, whether we were to understand this as the voice and sentiment of the fathers and counsellors of the Presbyterian church. I rejoice to say, for the honour of my country, and for the religion I profess, that

nothing is farther from it. I recognise in this act, the features of some fierce and furious spirits, who in an inauspicious hour of darkness and incaution, gained so much the ascendant in that body as to produce this abortion of a *Bull*, who has faintly roared once, and will never be heard again. I have no doubt that its authors ere this, do, even in their closets, shudder before the bar of publick sentiment; that they severally and individually wish, that at that moment they had been a day's journey from the Synod, and employed in a manner, if it would not promote, that it would not endanger the prosperity and existence of the church.

INVESTIGATOR.

Thus closes the second series of Numbers on the Triangle. A momentous question now occurs:—How can this ecclesiastical war in the middle states, between two classes of our orthodox brethren, be converted to pacifick and useful purposes? In addition to what has been said on the subject in the last volume of the *Christian Disciple*, nothing better now presents itself, than a candid exhibition of the analogy between such wars and the more bloody contests of Christian nations.

First. The rulers of a nation assume the right of making war for "actual injuries inflicted, or about to be inflicted." They also assume the right of judging and deciding, each in his own cause,

while in fact they are as liable to err as other people. Of course in a multitude of instances, war has been proclaimed, while the greater portion of error and wrong was on the part of those who first appealed to arms.

This is precisely the case in the wars of different sects of Christians. Let ecclesiastical history be impartially examined and it will unquestionably appear, that in a majority of the cases in which a publick body of clergymen have assumed the right of denouncing as hereticks, and "holding up" their dissenting brethren "to publick odium and abhorrence," the greater portion of error and wrong, has been on the part of those who assumed this power. Whether it be so in the case before us, the Judge of all the earth will decide. But this may be said without danger of contradiction, that in a majority of cases, where ecclesiastical bodies have assumed such power, their conduct has born a greater resemblance to that of councils of war, than councils of peace; both in regard to the temper displayed, and the prudence and justice of their proceedings.

Second. The contests of nations are produced by the influence of a *few* misguided or aspiring individuals, who have the address to diffuse their own jealousies, prejudices, and warring passions into the minds of others. Thus exciting a spirit of clamour, reviling, and calumny, they prepare the multitude

for a declaration of war ; and these manifestos are generally stuffed with groundless or exaggerated allegations, adapted to excite enmity and inflame the passions of men.

Is it not even so in the wars between different sects ? What says Investigator ? After assuring us that the paragraphs in the Pastoral Letter, of which he complains, are not to be understood as "the voice and sentiment of the fathers and counselors of the Presbyterian church," he adds, "I recognise in this act the features of some fierce and furious spirits, who, in an inauspicious hour of darkness and incaution, gained so much the ascendant in that body, as to produce this abortion of a *Bull*." Yes, a '*Bull*,' which probably involves in a sentence of condemnation, nine-tenths of all the professed, and all the *real* Christians on the face of the earth, and perhaps all who are now in heaven. But is not this *liberality* with a *vengeance*, and just such stuff as war is made of ?

Third. In the publick wars of nations, each party imagines itself to be in the right, while both are in the wrong in a greater or less degree. Each is blind to its own faults, but quicksighted to observe the aberrations of the other. Such we may presume is always the case in the wars between Christians of different sects. However orthodox *contending* Christians may be in their opinions, they are too ge-

nerally heretical in their tempers and proceedings.

Fourth. In modern times the delusive influence of custom, is both a cause and a support of national contests. Had no such thing been known in former ages, as deciding controversies by the sword,—at the bare proposal of such a course, the people of any nation would shrink with horror. But now they can flock to the military standard, glory in the most destructive exploits, and rush on death "as the horse rusheth into the battle !" In like manner, custom has its influence in the wars of contending sects. Had it not been customary in past ages, for the majority to make their own creed the standard for other people, the conduct of the Synod of Philadelphia would have appeared as irrational as that of Procrustes, who ordered other men to be measured by his own bedstead ; and "if too long lop them, if too short stretch them." But as it was the custom in past ages to employ, not only the denunciations of councils, but the sword, the stake, the faggot and the fire, in support of the opinions of the majority ; it is now thought a proof of lenity and moderation, if dissenters escape with their lives, although *they are robbed* of their reputation, and the *community* of their usefulness.

Fifth. Publick war is a curse to community. It injures those by whom it is commenced, as well as those against whom it

is waged. During its continuance, it diverts the attention of people from their best interests, bewilders their minds, injures their morals, and leads many to imagine that they are in the way to happiness and glory, on no bet-

ter ground than that they are brave to fight.

All this is true of the less bloody conflicts of different sects. Is it not then time to form peace societies for the abolition of ecclesiastical wars?

A FRAGMENT OF ANCIENT HISTORY.

MELCHIZEDEK was an eastern prince, remarkable for his pacifick disposition, and was the founder of an extensive empire. He published a code of laws expressive of his heavenly temper, which he made the rule of duty to all his subjects. His object was to establish a kingdom which should be distinguished by "righteousness and peace," and by the kindness of his subjects one to another. To this end his laws were wisely adapted. They not only prohibited acts of violence or injury, but required of his people, a benevolent and forbearing spirit towards all mankind. Obedience to his commands, and love one to another, he constituted as the badge by which his faithful subjects were to be known, and by which they were to be distinguished from the warring multitudes with which they were surrounded.

That his people might be well informed, and furnished with a variety of motives to obey him, he accompanied his laws with many important lessons of instruction, relating to his own charac-

ter, the nature of his government, his affection for his people, what he had already done for them, and what might be expected of him in future.

So long as his subjects kept their eyes and their hearts fixed on the laws of the empire, as the rule of duty, and the criterion of fidelity, the affairs of the kingdom prospered; the people were known by their mutual love, and by their meek and peaceable disposition towards all their fellow beings. The king was honoured by their obedience, and he rejoiced in their happiness.

But the lessons of instruction, accompanying the laws, were written in the language of men, which is ever liable to some changes, and to some ambiguity. Certain words and phrases were found capable of different acceptations, which gave rise to several abstract inquiries; but these were of very little importance as they related either to duty or happiness. However, on these points there were different opinions among the people; each supposing his own, not only the more correct, but the more hono-

rary to the sovereign. Controversies commenced; bad passions were enlisted into the service, which made the differences of opinion appear ten times greater than they otherwise would have done. As the heat of controversy increased, the attention of the subjects was diverted more and more from the laws, as a rule of life; and became fixed on the controverted questions, as the things of primary importance. Each opinion had its advocate, who became the demagogue of a party. New standards of excellence and fidelity were established, which the king never thought of, and which were entirely distinct from the laws he had enjoined. Each party had a standard of its own, to which others must conform or be treated as rebels to the prince. Obedience to the laws was considered as nothing, or no better than hypocrisy, unless accompanied with a professed belief of some party dogma, which nobody understood. But such was the unhappy state of things, that if a man assented to the dogmas of one party, he was sure to be condemned and reprobated by another. Mutual revilings, unqualified censures, and violent quarrellings became the order of the day; and were regarded as the fruit of love to the king, and zeal in his cause. The very things which he had forbidden, were esteemed as proper expressions of regard to his name. His benign precepts were trodden under foot, or made sub-

servient to the very passions which they prohibited. At length the people became so perfectly deluded, as even to imagine that it was no violation of the laws of love and good will, to rob and murder one another.

Thus, by changing the standard of duty and excellence, or the test of a true and faithful subject, this bewildered people introduced "confusion and every evil work." Still professing obedience to the pacifick prince, they became warriors, and gloried in their shame. Some indeed, fought only with pens, surcharged with venom, or with tongues, "set on fire of hell;" but others, with equal propriety, armed themselves with swords and engines of death, and became renowned for the murders they committed, and for the havock, desolation, and woe which they spread through the empire.

After many days, the leaders of the several parties were summoned to the seat of government. While on their way, each one was animated with the hope of hearing the approving voice of the king—"Well done, good and faithful servant!" Each was called upon to produce evidence of his personal fidelity; and each had much to say of the time he had spent in combating the errors of others, and in bringing into disrepute, or to the stake, such of his brethren as had been so impious and rebellious as to dissent from him on the GREAT POINTS of controversy.

The king replied, "the lessons of instruction, which accompanied my precepts, were not given you as articles of contention; they were designed to show the benignity of my character, the equity of my government, and to induce my subjects to obey my laws. My PRECEPTS were given as the *rule of your duty*, and the *test of your fidelity*. They required of you mutual love, forbearance and peace. Is it not clearly written in the Law Book—"This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you?" and 'by this shall all men know that ye are my *faithful subjects*, if ye have love one to another?' What meaneth then this recourse to contention and blood! which of my commands did you obey in these seditious and revengeful proceedings!" He paused, and they were speechless.

Having waited a proper time, the king proceeded, "It was," said he, "to have been expected that, among men of various intellects and advantages, there would be a diversity of opinion on some points. But this diversity gives opportunity for the display of that spirit of mutual forbearance and kindness, which my precepts enjoined. Besides, have you not all repeatedly acknowledged, that those things in my book, which are of the greatest importance, are the most plainly expressed, and are intelligible even to the weak and un-

learned, that although there are some things 'hard to be understood,' still there is enough that is plain, to guide all my subjects who are of a tractable and obedient temper in the path of virtue, happiness and glory? Is it not plainly written, 'if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not?' Were you not severally admonished to forbear censorious judging by this impressive language—"Who art thou, that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth." Why then have you passed over the weightier matters of my law, and the more simple and important instructions of my book, and spent your time and your zeal on abstract questions of your own invention? By assuming powers which were never delegated to you; by turning away your eyes from my precepts, and establishing other standards of virtue and tests of fidelity, you have bewildered yourselves, misled the multitude, and filled my empire with confusion, wrangling, violence and wo. While you had daily evidence of my long-suffering towards you all, why did you not exercise the spirit of forbearance one towards another? This I explicitly required; and 'to obey is better than sacrifice,' and especially is it better than such sacrifices as you have made, of the peace and happiness of my kingdom,

and of the lives of my subjects. What then have you to answer for yourselves?"

The king again paused—but every mouth was stopped, every tongue was silent.

The sovereign then added—"Were I to treat you with as

little lenity as you have shown to others, what would be your fate?"

They all trembled, fell prostrate, confessed their guilt, begged for mercy, and promised reformation.

Wonders of Antiquity, chap. V.

REVIEW OF SACRED GEOGRAPHY.

Sacred Geography: or a Gazetteer of the Bible, containing, in alphabetical order, a geographical description of all the countries, kingdoms, nations, and tribes of men, with all the villages, towns, cities, provinces, hills, mountains, rivers, lakes, seas, and islands, mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures, or Apocrypha; including an account of the religion, government, population, fulfilment of prophecies, and present condition of the most important places. By ELIJAH PARISH, D. D. Minister of Byfield, Massachusetts. Embellished with a new map of the principal countries mentioned in the Sacred Scriptures.

Here through the flow'ry walks of Eden rove,
Court the soft breeze, or range the spicy grove;
There tread on hallow'd ground, where Angels trod,
And rev'rend Patriarchs talk'd, as friends, with God.

Boston: Published by Samuel T. Armstrong, No. 50, Cornhill.

IN an age distinguished by extraordinary efforts to extend the knowledge of the Scriptures throughout the world, a work which is adapted to render their contents more intelligible and interesting, claims the regard and patronage of the publick. A large and important portion of the Bible is historical. The history, however, relates to countries remote from us; and any person of much reading and reflection well knows, that the better he is acquainted with the geography

of any country, the more he is interested in reading its history. One person is well acquainted with the geography of the United States, and of the British provinces in America; another is ignorant on this particular. How differently will they be affected in reading the history of the American revolution! How many interesting ideas will be observed by the former, which will be concealed from the latter. In like manner, the historical parts of the Bible will be more or less

interesting to the reader, according to his knowledge of the geography of the countries in which the events occurred. The Gazetteer of the Bible describes *all* the countries and places mentioned in the Scriptures.

To give such information respecting any new and valuable work, as may bring it into more general circulation, is not only a pleasant service, but a duty which individuals owe to the publick, and to authors. A Gazetteer of the Bible may be considered as a new work in the republic of letters, none having been published before, as far as we know, since that of Eusebius, in the fourth century; written in Greek, and translated into Latin, by Jerome. This circumstance renders it more a duty to notice this work in our reviews, because its existence may not yet be extensively known. Though universal geography is an interesting and pleasant study, yet *scripture* geography is more pleasant and instructive, because we feel *more interested* in those countries, than in the globe at large. Who would not be more gratified to read a description of the present state of Canaan or Jerusalem, than of China or Peking? In this volume, with great labour, the author has given a particular account of all the places mentioned in the Bible. He not only tells where they are situated, but, when their importance renders it proper, gives a historical sketch of them, and describes their present situa-

tion. Of those places, concerning which important prophecies have been delivered, it is shown, that those prophecies have been fulfilled. Though we are not wholly unacquainted with books "on the prophecies," yet none of them have more forcibly impressed us with the *divine authority* of Revelation. In those books we commonly find much time spent in arguing and proving particular points, which, after all, may not be quite certain. But, in the Gazetteer of the Bible, it is made evident, from *history*, from well known *facts*, that numerous prophecies have been fulfilled. Thus, Ezekiel had said, "Tyre shall be the place for the spreading of nets." Accordingly our author quotes the celebrated traveller *Bruce*, who says, "I came to be a mournful witness of the truth of that prophecy, that Tyre should be a rock for fishers to dry their nets on; two wretched fishermen, with miserable nets, having just given over the occupation with very little success." In Revelations iii. 16, God threatens the utter ruin of Laodicea. In the Gazetteer we read, that the place is now utterly desolated and without any inhabitant, excepting "wolves, and jackals, and foxes." In Obediah, it is foretold, verse 10 and 18, that the race of Esau or Edom "should be cut off for ever;" that there should be "none remaining." In the Gazetteer we learn, that about the first century after Christ, their name was abolished, and the rem-

nant of the tribe was scattered among the Arabs and Jews. These are places taken at first glance, as we turned over the pages; other information of the kind, and more particularly stated, is scattered through the volume.

We think the Gazetteer of the Bible particularly useful to young persons, rendering the word of God more interesting and pleasant to them, by making the contents more intelligible. Of the sea of Galilee, of the Red Sea, of Accho, Gaza, Bethlehem, or Ephesus, they perhaps know nothing; yet a knowledge of them might confirm their faith in Christianity, and give them a more rational belief in scripture history.

The Red Sea was passed in one night; but in general it is one hundred and twenty miles broad; as it advances northwardly, however, it becomes narrower, and the Gazetteer informs us, that where the Israelites marched through, it is only twelve miles in breadth.

How many persons neglect the Bible, not because they are unbelievers, or vicious, but because it contains so many things which need explanation. It would be wise, in parents, to put such books into the hands of their children as blend *entertainment* with instruction, and *pleasure* with profit. In another particular, the Gazetteer confirms the faith of those who read the narratives of scripture. Numerous quotations from modern

travellers describe towns and places, just as they are presented by the inspired writers. Thus we often read in the Bible of going *up* to Jerusalem, as though it stood on elevated ground, and in other places it is mentioned, that it is surrounded by other hills or mountains, still *higher*. Psalm cxxv. 2. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem." Accordingly in the Gazetteer we learn, that "Jerusalem is situated on a rocky *mountain*, surrounded on all sides, except the north, with a steep *ascent*, and these again are environed with other hills." In scripture we also read of going *up* to Hebron, and the Gazetteer informs us, that Hebron is still in being, but very much fallen from its ancient lustre. "It is now only a village, standing partly on a plain and partly on a *mountain*, from which is a pleasant prospect of the plain of Mamre, planted with vineyards." Similar remarks might be made respecting Jericho and other places. "A certain man went *down* from Jerusalem to Jericho," Luke x. 30. According to the Gazetteer, Jericho stands in a *valley*, surrounded by hills.

In the course of the work numerous authors are quoted, some of them very rare in this country, written in Latin or Greek, as Eusebius, Jerome, Bonfrenius, Monachus, Sanson, &c. &c. A store of knowledge is here opened, not easily found elsewhere. No other work, we presume, contains such a full account of

sacred geography. In Calmet, in Brown, in some commentators, in numerous books of travels, and other works, we find many valuable *morsels* of this kind of information; but here we are presented with all that is most important in those numerous works, collected and condensed into *one* volume.

As civilization, science, and moral improvement, is advancing by new modes of instruction, by the establishment of MISSIONARY SOCIETIES, MORAL, and PEACE SOCIETIES, it may be presumed, that those countries where Christianity was first promulgated, and which have since been overwhelmed with Mahometan superstition, will become more and more objects of publick attention, and a Gazetteer of the Bible be a *family book*.

The following extracts will show the character of the work, and present a specimen of the author's style and manner, which are correct and perspicuous. Concerning Bethany, so often mentioned in the gospels, the following information is given:—

“ BETHANY, a considerable place, situated at the foot, or on the mount of Olives, about fifteen furlongs eastward of Jerusalem. Here it was, that Martha and Mary lived with their brother Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from the dead, John ix. 18; and it was here, that Mary poured the perfume on our Saviour's head. Bethany is but a very small village. One of our modern travellers acquaints us, that near the entrance of the place, there is an old ruin, called the castle of Lazarus, supposed to have been the mansion-house, where he and his sisters lived. At the

bottom of a descent, not far from the castle, you see his sepulchre, which the Turks hold in great veneration, and use it for an oratory, or place of prayer. Here, going down by twenty-five steps, you come, at first, into a small square room, and thence creep into another, that is less, about a yard and half deep, in which the body is said to have been laid. About a bow-shot thence, you pass by the place, which, they say, was Mary Magdalene's house, and thence, descending a steep hill, you come to the fountain of the apostles, which is so called, because, according to tradition, these holy persons were wont to refresh themselves here, between Jerusalem and Jericho, as very probably they might, because the fountain is close to the roadside, and is very inviting to the thirsty traveller. This village was famous for its figs. From Jerusalem, Jesus Christ, having led his disciples to mount Olivet, as far as to Bethany, here he lifted up his hands, and blessed them, and while he blessed them, they beheld, and he was separated from them, taken up, and carried into Heaven, a cloud receiving him out of sight. The spot now shown for the place of our Lord's ascension is at the top of mount Olivet, where anciently was a large church, built in honour of that glorious triumph. An octagonal cupola, eight yards in diameter, is now standing, as they say, over the very spot where were the last footsteps of the divine Saviour in this world.”

The following interesting and compendious account is given, concerning the tribe of Gad:

“ GAD, tribe of. The portion of this tribe, lay east of the Jordan, having the half tribe of Manasseh, north, Reuben, south, and the mountains of Gilead, east. They, however, marched over Jordan with the other tribes to subdue the Canaanites for their brethren, or that they might have a quiet habitation.

“ They returned, not only victorious, but loaded with spoil. Moses, the law-giver of Israel, advanced with their hosts, till they entered the limits of

this tribe ; then ascended the mountain of Nebo, and expired.

" When this tribe emerged from the slavery of Egypt, their able men were forty-five thousand six hundred and fifty ; but when numbered in the wilderness, they had decreased to forty thousand five hundred.

" The tribe of Gad was distinguished for its intrepid valour. When David was in distress, because of Saul, and was concealed at Ziklag, and at the season when the Jordan had overflowed its banks, then eleven captains from the tribe of Gad plunged into the swelling flood, proceeded to David, and routed his enemies, from the east to the west : ' Their faces were like the faces of lions, and they were swift as the roes on the mountains.' The situation of this tribe on the frontiers of the country, and ever exposed to attacks from the Arabs, compelled them to maintain the spirit of soldiers. Jacob had said, ' Gad, a troop shall overcome him, but he shall overcome at the last.' Or as Dr. Clarke, translates the passage, ' Gad, an army shall attack him, and he shall attack in return.' It is likely, saith the Doctor, that this prophecy had an especial fulfilment, when this tribe, in conjunction with Reuben, and the half tribe of Manasseh obtained a great victory over the Hagarites, taking captive one hundred thousand men, two thousand asses, fifty thousand camels, and two hundred fifty thousand sheep."

We only add a short extract, respecting the celebrated city of Jerusalem.

" At present, Jerusalem is called by the Turks, Cudzembaric and Coudshe-riff, and is reduced to a poor thinly inhabited town, about three miles in circumference, situated on a rocky mountain surrounded on all sides, except the north, with a steep ascent and deep val-

lies ; and these again environed with other hills, at some distance from them. The soil is for the most part stony, yet affords corn, wine, and olives, where cultivated ; but scarce any thing except grass, heath, and other spontaneous herbs, and shrubs, which are left to run up to seed, grow at a distance from the city. The houses are built of flint stones, one story high. The top is flat and plastered, having battlements a yard high. In the day time they hide from the sun, under the roof ; in the night, they walk, eat and sleep on it. The number of inhabitants are said to be about twelve or fourteen thousand. Some streets seem to be ruins, rather than dwelling houses. Within the walls, large places lie desolate, covered with dirt and rubbish. Their gardens are ill managed, being surrounded with low walls of mud ; they are constantly washing down and requiring new repairs. The citizens are tailors, cooks, smiths, or shoemakers, a poor wicked race, the scum of different nations, principally Arabs."

The science of geography, has not arrived to a state of perfection. The approaches towards that state, are the fruit of successive efforts. The labours of one generation, lay a foundation for advances in the next. The writers of the present age are indebted to those of the past ; and the writers of the next generation, will be indebted to those of the present. But men who devote their time and talents for the instruction of their fellow citizens, must be encouraged by the sale of their works, or their labours will, of course, be suspended.

THE FIRST DUEL IN NEW-ENGLAND.

" The first duel in New-England, was fought on the 18th of June, 1621, on a challenge at

single combat, with sword and dagger, between two servants, both of whom, were wounded

For this outrage, they were sentenced by the whole company to the ignominious punishment of having their head and feet tied together, and of lying thus twenty-four hours, without meat or drink. After suffering, however, in that painful posture one hour, at their master's intercession, and their own humble request, with the promise of amendment, they were released by the government."

American Annals, vol. I. p. 210.

What a GLORIOUS and DIGNIFIED EXAMPLE is followed by our gentlemen of honour! Some

of them, perhaps, are the descendants of the "two servants;" and so far are they from having degenerated from these noble ancestors, that they have retained their *spirit*, and adopted a more polite manner of murdering one another!

The mode of punishment adopted by our forefathers, in the case of duelling, would probably be thought rather coarse by our gentlemen of honour! Yet had it been uniformly adhered to, it might have been the occasion of saving many lives, and of giving many wicked men a longer space for repentance.

ABOLITION OF DUELLING.

It has been stated in the public papers, that "an act passed the legislature of New-York, on the 5th of Nov. for the *suppression of duelling*. Every person who gives or accepts a challenge to fight a duel, or is, knowingly, the bearer of a challenge, is rendered incapable of holding any office, civil or military under the state. The members of the senate and assembly, and all civil and military officers, except town officers,—all counsellors, attorneys, and solicitors of the court of Chancery, Supreme court, or any court of Common Pleas, or Mayor's court, who are appointed or admitted after the first of July next, are to be required to take an oath, that they have not been engaged in

any duel since July 1st, 1816; and that they will not be concerned in any duel, directly or indirectly, while the act remains in force, and they are inhabitants of the state."

In a future day, this act may be regarded as a *monument*, showing how far civilization had advanced in New-York, in 1816. We rejoice, however, that there has been found virtue enough in the legislature of that state, to pass an act for the suppression of duelling. But can an *oath* restrain men of so *little principle*, that a law is necessary to keep them from *murdering* one another! And is it not a reproach to human nature, that, in this age, and among a people professing the Christian religion, a law

should be needful to prevent a compliance with a custom so absolutely barbarous? Nay, to restrain men from duelling, who are likely to be thought of for senators, or for any other important office in the state?—Why was an exception made in favour of “town officers?” Are the people of that state so generally in the habit of duelling, that they cannot find a sufficient number of other men for “town officers,” who are as well qualified and as

reputable as *duellists*? if not, alas! for the morals of such a community.

But, says the objector, some even of the members of Congress are duellists. This will not be denied; but we may venture to assert, that this fact is a reproach to the whole nation; and that it will probably, hereafter, be regarded as proof, that as late as the early part of the 19th century, the people of the United States were semi-barbarians.

POETRY.

THE BLISS OF HEAVEN.

No dormant state, I hail, of flat repose,
Where pant no ardours, where no action glows;
No pool of standing life that always sleeps,
O'er whose still sea no breeze of spirit sweeps;
No scene, as priests describe the bliss above,
Of heavy calmness or of slumbering love;
Where useless saints on easy thrones recline,
And tune their idle wires to songs divine.

Bliss, in whose kindled frame such fires I see,
How much unlike are these dead forms to thee!

Delightful state! in which the admiring muse,
The heavenly form of true fruition views!
All bosoms throbbing with a publick zeal;
All minds at work t' advance the general weal;
In tuneful chime, on one great aim intent,
Harmonious moving, with a sweet consent;
Exploring Nature's mine, where Heav'n has stor'd
The means of welfare in a boundless hoar'd;
Whatever charms the social state they lend,
Still eager all, the beauteous piece to mend;
Content in no degree of bliss to rest,
Studious to add new blessings to the blest;

All present excellence resolv'd t' excel,
Whate'er its growth, the sum of good to swell;
Awaken'd intellect yet more excite,
To truth's best lovers more endear her light.
Of minds the most enlarg'd expand the views,
In breasts the most inspir'd new fires infuse;
Bid joy sublime to loftier transport rise,
And breathe yet more of heaven in Paradise.

Such the fair state, in which alone appears
The genuine smile a pure Elysium wears!
The reign of strife, and wrong, and tumult o'er,
And fall and ruin, mournful words no more!
Serenely fervid! busily at ease!
A scene of active rest, and glowing peace!*

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS PEACE SOCIETY.

ALL human institutions are stamped with imperfection; and the best of them are capable of being improved by time and experience. Considering the circumstances under which the Massachusetts Peace Society originated, the smallness of its funds, and the powerful prepossessions it had to encounter, it was not to be expected that the first Report of its officers, would contain a list of facts either very numerous, splendid, or interesting. Such an institution, like a child in its infancy, requires time to grow up and come to maturity. Its first efforts will naturally be feeble, and often display the want of that wisdom which experience alone can give.

Some inconvenience appears to have resulted from the want of a matured system of operation; and a

consequent delay of distributing publications according to the directions of the board.

Excepting the Circular Letter, the distribution of pamphlets was of a date so recent, that little information of their effect could be expected at this time. Still, something has been done in the course of the year; some impression has been made, and effects produced; and some information has been received favourable to the objects of the society.

Two thousand and five hundred copies of a Circular Letter were printed, and the greater part of them have been distributed in the United States. Some copies have been sent to Europe, and some to the neighbouring British Provinces.

An edition of two thousand co-

* These beautiful and animating lines have been selected from Fawcett's poem, entitled "Change."

pies of the Sermon on War, by the Rev. Mr. Channing, has been printed at the expense of the society.

In refunding the half of the annual subscription, it was the aim of the committee to furnish each member with two copies of the Sermon on War, one copy of a Solemn Review of the Custom of War, and three numbers of the Friend of Peace, including what had been received by many of the members, of No. 4. The six pamphlets, at the wholesale price, amounted, precisely, to the half dollar to be refunded.

In compliance with the vote of the board, the committee have sent to the several Colleges in New-England, thirty-eight complete sets of all the publications, which have been circulated by the society; namely, the Circular Letter, the Solemn Review, six numbers of the Friend of Peace, and the Sermon on War. One set was assigned to each College Library, and one to each literary society in the several Colleges, "known to have a Library."

A set of all the publications, except the Circular Letter, has been presented to several gentlemen who had contributed to the funds of the society, without becoming members; but they are gentlemen whom the society would gladly acknowledge as members, should it be their pleasure to give their names for that purpose.

In addition to what has been done by distributing the Sermon on War, gratuitously, some copies of the Solemn Review, and of the Friend of Peace have been sent to members, as agents; and a few to gentlemen of reputation and influence, in distant places, for the purpose of procuring additional subscribers, and exciting attention to the objects of the society.

The following is intended as a correct statement of the distributions which have been made, including the distribution to the members of the society :

Of the Circular Letter,	-	2260
— Solemn Review,	-	232
— different Numbers of the		
Friend of Peace,	-	925
— Sermon on War,	-	1403

In all, 4820

There is now in the hands of the Executive Committee :

Of the Circular Letter,	240
— Sermon on War,	590

The copies sent to agents for procuring subscribers, will, doubtless, be returned, or, instead of them, the names of subscribers to the society. Several names have already been reported, which were procured by copies thus distributed.

That impressions have been made, and effects produced, favourable to the objects of the society, may appear from the following facts:—

The Massachusetts Convention of Congregational Ministers have, by vote, and by an interesting address to the publick, approved the object of the society, and recommended, "that the members of this Convention become members of the society; and that they severally use their influence to induce others to become members, and to promote the formation of Auxiliary Peace Societies in their respective vicinities."

The General Association of Massachusetts Proper, in a Pastoral Address to the churches, have spoken of Peace Societies, in language sufficiently respectful. These are the words of the Address:—"Should Peace Societies be extended, they will be handmaids, or rather guar-

dian angels, to other benevolent institutions. No means seems so likely to produce universal peace, as the influence of such societies."

The united testimony of two such respectable bodies of the Ministers of religion, communicated to the churches, must naturally make a powerful impression and lead many to reflect.

Since the formation of the society, more than one hundred and thirty respectable members have been added. The present number of members, already reported, is one hundred and seventy-three, of which more than fifty are ministers of religion; and a considerable number are Laymen of high standing, and who would be an honour to any society.

Had no other facts come to our knowledge, those which have been mentioned might well encourage the heart of every friend of peace. But information has been received from different sections of the United States, and from foreign countries, which affords still further ground for rejoicing in hope. For it clearly appears, that the wonder-working God has been exciting his children, in various parts of the world, to reflect on the barbarous and anti-christian character of war, and to exert themselves for the abolition of this tremendous scourge of man.

Information has been received, that the Peace Society in New-York is in a growing state; that a Peace Society has been formed in Ohio; and that the principles of peace are rapidly gaining ground in different parts of the country.

Nor is it in America alone that the God of peace has been opening the eyes of his children, on this interesting subject. Even prior to the formation of our society, he had shown that the hearts of kings and

emperours were in his hand, by exciting three powerful sovereigns to unite in a holy league. Four other powers have since been added, and now, seven of the European governments have bound themselves by a solemn covenant, to make the precepts of the gospel their guide, both in governing their respective subjects, and in their treatment of each other. And the preservation of peace is the avowed object of the alliance.

In Great Britain, also, the eyes of many have been opened. A society for the abolition of war has been founded; and the subject of war has been discussed with great freedom and ability.

It has also been recently announced, that the Prince Regent has signified to the allied sovereigns, that although the form of the British constitution prevents his signing the treaty, called the Holy League, yet they "have his entire concurrence in the principles they expressed, and in the declaration they have made."

Admitting the possibility, and even the probability, that the Alliance for the preservation of peace will be violated, and that there will again be wars in Europe prior to the happy day, when the nations shall learn war no more,—still the Holy League may be of vast advantage. It is calculated to call the attention of people, of all classes, to the destructive character of war. It opens a door for a free discussion of its nature and principles, both from the pulpit and the press. Of course, the number of the friends of peace will be continually increasing, till their combined influence shall put an end to the game of blood.

Intelligence of all the foregoing facts has been received since the origin of the Massachusetts Peace

Society; and there are still other facts which demand our notice. In Massachusetts, Rhode-Island, New-York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland, the leading characters in the Society of Friends have displayed a benevolent and persevering spirit, by circulating extensively, publications in favour of peace, without any partial regard to the denomination from which they originated. They rejoice in the existence of Peace Societies among Christians of other denominations; and they have both the ability and the disposition to afford important aid.

It should be added, that in the course of the past year, a surprising number of benevolent institutions have been founded, of various names, and for various purposes. Each of which may be regarded as an auxiliary to Peace Societies, and Peace Societies as auxiliaries to each of them.

It may now be asked, what institution was ever founded for a nobler object, than the abolition of war and the preservation of peace? If by diffusing the peaceful principles and spirit of the gospel we effect the abolition of war, we abolish the "school of vice" and depravity, and establish in its room the school of Christian virtue and benevolence; we dry up the sources of desolating ambition, and open a new channel for the display of heroism, and the attainment of glory; nay, we obstruct the road to perdition, and lay open and illuminate the path of life.

We may further ask, what institution, which had the custom of ages, the habits of education, the ambition of the aspiring, and the prejudices of a world to encounter, was ever blessed with brighter pros-

pects of success, at its first anniversary, than the Massachusetts Peace Society? When this society was formed, with what a gloom was it surrounded! except when it looked up to the Father of lights, or into the gospel of his Son. Those who first conversed on the subject, hardly knew whom it would be proper to consult, or where to look for a sufficient number of members to be called a *society*. Not a syllable had reached our country respecting the pacifick League of the three sovereigns; and nothing, perhaps, was more remote from expectation than such a phenomenon. It was, indeed, a formidable objection in the minds of many against joining the society, that nothing of the kind was known to exist in Europe. But now this objection is obviated; the gloom which accompanied the dawn is dispelled, and the SUN OF PEACE is above the horizon. It may be occasionally eclipsed, or its light may be partially obstructed by intervening clouds; yet it will pursue its course, till it shall shine with meridian splendour.

It is also a fact, which demands our gratitude, that notwithstanding the general prepossession, that wars are as inevitable as earthquakes and tempests, and that an effort to abolish them would be both useless and dangerous, and little less than fighting against the Almighty; yet these prepossessions have been gradually subsiding, or at least they have not been suffered to display themselves in acts of hostility against the society. Some things have indeed been written, from a misapprehension of the objects of the society, but much less than might naturally have been anticipated, and probably very little, compared with what

would have appeared, had the writers been met with intemperate replies.

The friends of peace have no need to adopt a course of angry altercation in defence of their principles. Candid appeals to the understanding, the conscience, and the heart, are much better adapted to advance the cause of peace. Strong prepossessions are not to be instantaneously removed; nor by other than friendly and peaceable means.—Harshness and asperity are much more likely to fix and increase prejudices, than to eradicate them. Besides, in pleading the cause of peace, it would be very indecorous and inconsistent to indulge any other than a pacifick spirit. Soft words turn away wrath; they also open the ears and conciliate the affections of reasonable and reflecting men.

It is, however, much to the honour of those of our fellow-citizens, who have doubted the utility of Peace Societies, that they have so generally adopted the principle of Gamaliel, and *let us alone*, till it should appear whether this counsel and this work were of men, or of God. And we may devoutly hope that they will not much longer be kept in suspense, on a question of such importance to themselves, to us, and to the world.

Christians have long been in the habit of commemorating, at this season of the year, the birth of THE PRINCE OF PEACE. It is now eighteen hundred and sixteen years since the anthem of Angels was heard by the Shepherds of Bethlehem—"Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace; good will towards men." It was at this season of the last year, that the Emperour Alexander proclaimed, in Russia,

the pacifick Alliance. In the same month, the Peace Society was formed in Ohio. At this season of the last year, the Massachusetts Peace Society had its origin. The avowed object in all these recent institutions, is, to carry into effect the grand and benignant purpose of God, in sending his Son as the Prince of Peace.

Thus said the benevolent Messiah—"The Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them." His doctrines, his precepts, his prohibitions, his examples, and his prayers, were all adapted to such a heavenly purpose. In subserviency to this purpose, our society was formed. To this end all its operations should be directed. And what can be more animating than the thought of being workers together with God, for the redemption of our race, from the oppressions, the crimes, and the miseries of war; and for the establishment of peace and good will in a world of intelligent beings for whom the Saviour died, and who have for ages been in the habit of destroying one another, and of glorying in their shame.

From divine prophecies, and from what God has already done, we may derive hope and animation. But let us never indulge the thought, that those predictions which involve the agency of men, will be accomplished without that agency. Having put our hands to the plough, let us never look back. Having enlisted as soldiers of the Prince of Peace, let us quit ourselves like men. With our minds deeply impressed with the bloody and revengeful character of war, and its contrariety to the spirit of our religion, let us resolve, in the language

of Mr. Wilberforce, "Never, never will we desist, till we have wiped away this scandal from the Christian name."*

The first Annual Meeting of the Massachusetts Peace Society was held in Boston, at the Chauncey Place, December 26, 1816; and the above Report was read, accepted, and ordered to be printed.

Officers elected for the ensuing year.

His Hon. Wm. Phillips, *President*.
 Hon. Thomas Dawes, *Vice-Pres.*
 Elisha Ticknor, Esq. *Treasurer*.
 Rev. T. M. Harris, D.D. *Rec. Sec.*
 Rev. Noah Worcester, *Cor. Sec.*
 Rev. John Foster, D.D.
 Rev. Abiel Holmes, D.D.
 Professor Levi Hedge,
 Rev. Daniel Sharp,
 John Kenrick, Esq.
 William Wells, Esq.

Trustees.

FROM THE RIGHT REVEREND N. HERTZBERG, IN NORWAY.

July 10, 1815.

Most honourable Gentlemen, most beloved and highly esteemed,

It had come to my ears, some time ago, that there existed in England a certain society for distributing the Holy Scriptures; but I confess that was all I knew of it. For during the space of seven years, my native country lay bound fast in the fetters of war—mourning, sighing, and languishing for want of supply, both for body and soul.

Lately, however, I received, as it were, falling down from heaven, your annals, viz. the Tenth Report, for 1814, and a summary account of the British and Foreign Bible Society, of which I had never heard any thing but the name before. Thus receiving, in a moment, what I could not have hoped for in a year, I read—read again; and after reading it ten times over, it still delighted me. I lifted up my hoary head, and from my inmost soul, fetched sighs of gratitude to the paternal Ruler of the Universe. So many thousands, said I, refuse genuflection to the Baal of our times, indifference! So many thousands languish for the knowledge of the everlasting gospel! Oh, what im-

mense good are you doing from Greenland and Lapland to the uttermost parts of Siberia—from Lapland to Van Diemen's Land, yea, throughout the whole earth! What tender solicitude to procure the Bible for the poor inhabitants of Iceland! Thus the Divine Oracle is fulfilled, "Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; in them has he set his tabernacle for the Sun." Psalm 19, 4.

Last year I paid a visit to his Swedish Majesty's Privy Counsellor, the most excellent Count Rosenblad, a man of unparralleled candour, and in love unfeigned for the religion of Christ inferior to none. He it was, who first of all, encouraged me and my colleagues to exert ourselves for the establishment of a Bible Society in Norway, in order to provide the poor with the scriptures—promising to support us, which he also did: for the Crown Prince, His Highness Charles John, has lately made to our rising Bible Society, according to his distinguished generosity, a present of some-

* On the day of the Annual Meeting, a letter was received from the Hon. Samuel Freeman, of Portland, announcing the pleasing intelligence, that printed Proposals for a Peace Society, in Cumberland County, were in circulation, and that several Ministers of religion, and other respectable characters had already given their names.

what more than six thousand Banco rix dollars. I hope, by the blessing of God, the work will be carried on with vigour. Although thou art poor and exhausted, my country, be of good cheer! Thine undertaking will be furthered by the same Giver of all bounties, who commended the widow that increased the treasure of the temple, by casting in a mite.

Thus I have, most excellent gentlemen, given you as much information as I was able to impart, and regret very much, that in your annals, which contain intelligence from almost all the countries in the world, I found scarcely any thing from Norway. In the course of time, I hope to be able to give more satisfactory and agreeable accounts.

Let us lift up our hearts! Arise, brethren in Christ! But ye are risen already. Let us pray with one consent, that Christ would graciously bless the means in our hands. We have begun a sacred work; its beginning was under happy auspices; may still happier success crown the end!

Your most obedient servant,

NICHOLAO HERTZBERG.

Wesleyan Methodists.

The seventy-third Conference of the preachers of this denomination, was held in London, July 29, 1816. From the minutes of their conference, the Daily Advertiser has given the following account of the number of members of that denomination:

In Great-Britain	191,630
Ireland	28,542
France	35
Brussels	10
Gibraltar	68
Sierra Leone	129
Cape of Good Hope	42
Ceylon	56
West Indies	18,938
Nova Scotia	1,824
In America	211,165

Total of the Methodist Society throughout the world, 452,484.

Travelling Methodist Preachers,

In Great Britain	725
Ireland	132
On Foreign Missions	96
In America	704

Total 1657

BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS.

Massachusetts General and Lunatick Hospital.—It has been stated in the publick papers, that in three or four days a subscription was obtained in Boston, for these benevolent objects, amounting to \$84,802. This sum is exclusive of the Province House, given by the Legislature, which is estimated at 50,000 dollars. It has also been stated, that the Merrimack Humane Society have ordered their Treasurer to subscribe 2000 dollars towards the Hospital for the Insane.

Provident Institution, a Bank for Savings.—This Institution has been recently organized by the choice of the following officers:

William Phillips, President.

Vice Presidents.—John Phillips, Samuel Parkman, James Perkins, James Prince, John Lowell, Russell Sturges, Josiah Quincy, Jonathan Hunewell, Ozias Goodwin, Redford Webster, Jonathan Amory, jun. Joseph Coolige, jun.

Trustees.—Jesse Putnam, Elisha Ticknor, John Richards, Rev. Dr. Baldwin, J. D. Williams, John Bellows, William Mackay, Rev. W. E. Channing, J. L. Sullivan, Samuel Snelling, William Little, John Dorr, S. H. Walley, William Harris, Andrew Ritchie, Edward Tuckerman, jun. Gideon Snow, David Grenough, Samuel May, Gedney King, William Cockran, Thomas Motley, William Ropes, James Savage.

Ordinations and Installations.

Ordained at Chatham, in Connecticut, October 23, Rev. Hervey Talcott.

At Holden, October 30, Rev. John Walker.

At Foxborough, November 6, Rev. Thomas Williams.

At Medway, first Church, November 20, Rev. Luther Bailey. At the same time, a new meeting-house was dedicated. Dedicatory prayer by Rev. Mr. Wilson, of Providence. Sermon by Rev. Dr. Sanders, of Medfield. Introductory prayer of the ordination, by Rev. Mr. Ritchie, of Canton. Sermon by Rev. Dr. Richmond, of Stoughton. Consecrating prayer by Rev. Mr. Bulard, of Pepperell. Charge, by Rev. Mr. Morey, of Walpole. Right hand,

by Rev. Mr. Ide, of Medway. Concluding prayer, by Rev. Mr. Hull, of Raynham.

At Middleton, Rev. E. Hubbard. Introductory prayer by Rev. Mr. Eaton, of Boxford. Sermon by Rev. Professor M'Kean. Ordaining prayer by Rev. Dr. Dana, of Ipswich. Right hand by Rev. Mr. Kimball, of Ipswich. Concluding prayer by Rev. Mr. Loring, of Andover.

At Lee, Rev. Ebenezer Washburn was ordained as an Evangelist, with a view to a mission of one year in the county of Delaware, in Ohio.

The Rev. T. H. Skinner, late collegiate pastor of the *second*, was installed pastor of the *fifth* Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, December 1.

At Boston, January 1, Mr. Henry Ware, over the church and society in this town, lately under the pastoral care of the lamented Dr. Lathrop. Introductory prayer by the Rev. President Kirkland, of the University. Sermon by the Rev. Dr. Ware, of the University. Ordaining prayer by the Rev. T. Fiske, of West Cambridge. Charge by the Rev. Dr. Allyn, of Duxbury. Right hand of fellowship, by the Rev. Mr. Parkman, of Boston. Concluding prayer by the Rev. Dr. Holmes, of Cambridge.

Professors Inaugurated.

At Harvard University, December 11, John Gorham, M.D. was inaugurated as Erving Professor of Chymistry and Materia Medica; and Jacob Bigelow, M.D. as Rumford Professor of Philosophy.

OBITUARY.

Died in Waghore, India, the Rajah, or Prince of Beran. When dying, he assembled his children and ministers around him, gave them good advice, settled all his affairs, ordered a thousand cows to be distributed to the poor, and then slept with his fathers.

In Bath, England, George Gerson, a converted Jew.

The deaths in Charleston, South-Carolina, for one year, ending October 1st, were eight hundred and seventy-

six—of which three hundred and thirty-two were whites, and five hundred and forty-four coloured and blacks; four hundred and eighty-three were males, three hundred and ninety-three females; five hundred and sixty-seven adults, and three hundred and nine children; one hundred and forty-nine of consumption, one hundred and forty-six of fevers; four over one hundred years of age, twenty-nine from eighty to ninety, two from ninety to one hundred. The greatest number of deaths in any one month was in May, the smallest in November.

In Greenfield, Rev. Roger Newton, aged 80.

In Maryland, Rev. John G. Butler, Minister of the German Congregation in Cumberland, Alleghany.

In Lempster, December 17, Mr. Joshua Booth, aged 55. His death was occasioned by the bite of a cat about six weeks previous. The cat attacked him when in bed, and wounded him in the face. Not considering the circumstance as alarming, he neglected to use means to prevent its dreadful effect. Two days before his decease, symptoms of hydrophobia were apparent. Medical aid was then resorted to, but in vain.

Murder, or "as a fool dieth."

Mr. David C. Cooper, of New-York, was killed in a duel by Mr. Christopher Roberts, jun. of Elizabethtown. The affront, it is said, was first given by Mr. Roberts, still he was the challenger. Seconds being chosen, and the instruments of death provided, the parties proceeded together in a carriage to Trenton, where they supped in company, and the next morning met in the fatal field; whence Cooper was removed a lifeless corpse. Thus met two young men, friends and associates; and thus they parted! One to the bar of the righteous Jehovah, a sacrifice to pride and false honour. The other, fleeing the justice of an earthly tribunal, and stung with remorse and a guilty conscience, that, like Cain, he had shed the blood of his fellow man!

Newark Sentinel.